R E P O R T  R E S U M E S

ED 015 948 TE 500 043

THE EXPANDING HUMANITIES AND THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOLAR.

BY- ONG, WALTER J.
MODERN LANGUAGE ASSN. OF AMERICA, NEW YORK, N.Y.

PUB DATE SEP 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.40 8P.

DESCRIPTORS- *CULTURAL AWARENESS, *HUMANITIES, *HUMANITIES INSTRUCTION, *RESEARCH SKILLS, *LANGUAGE, LIBERAL ARTS, HIGHER EDUCATION, ENGLISH, LITERATURE, COMPUTERS, CREATIVITY, COLLEGE TEACHERS, TEACHER ROLE, TIME PERSPECTIVE, MASS MEDIA, HISTORY, MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION,

SCHOLARS MUST RECOGNIZE AND UNDERSTAND THE KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION IN THE HUMANITIES. THERE ARE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND ORAL TRADITIONS AVAILABLE FOR STUDY AS WELL AS NEW MATERIALS, INSIGHTS, AND TECHNIQUES OF STUDY IN EVERY HUMANISTIC FIELD. BUT BEYOND THE QUANTITY AND VARIETY IN RESEARCH, THE KNOWLEDGE EXPLOSION INVOLVES THE NEED FOR A NEW KIND OF HISTORICAL SENSE, A KNOWLEDGE OF CHANGES WITHIN THE HUMANITIES WHICH WERE NOT APPARENT TO THOSE IN ANY AGE MUCH BEFORE OUR OWN. THESE CHANGES ARE MOST APPARENT IN THE AREAS OF THE CULTURAL RELEVANCE OF LITERATURE, THE EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VERBAL PERFORMANCE AND ITS INTERACTION WITH THE NEWER MASS MEDIA, AND A SENSE OF THE SYNCHRONIC PRESENT, WHICH INCLUDES THE PAST. BECAUSE OF THESE CHANGES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC'S INSISTENCE ON THE RELEVANCE OF THE HUMANITIES, SCHOLARS SHOULD MAKE THEIR WORK RELEVANT. THE SCHOLAR ALSO MUST DEVELOP PRODUCTIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE TOOLS, ESPECIALLY THE COMPUTER WHICH PRESENT-DAY TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES FOR HANDLING MASSES OF MATERIALS. HE MUST ACQUIRE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ACQUIRE SKILLS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE PAST, LEST THE FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP OF PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE BE LOST. THIS SPEECH WAS DELIVERED AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE MLA STANDING COMMITTEES, NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 30, 1967, AND APPEARED IN "PMLA," VOLUME 82, NUMBER 4, SEPTEMBER 1967, PAGES 1-7. (BN)

ED015948


# PMLA

PUBLICATIONS OF THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

*Issued Seven Times a Year*

VOLUME LXXXII SEPTEMBER 1967 NUMBER 4


## THE EXPANDING HUMANITIES AND THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOLAR

WALTER J. ONG, S.J.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY Modern Language Association of America TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

Published by the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
62 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10011

TE 500 043

# THE EXPANDING HUMANITIES AND THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOLAR*

By Walter J. Ong, S.J., *Saint Louis University*

A COMMON assumption about the humanities used to be that they were always the same: both their subject matter and the ways of studying them were invariable. "The proper study of mankind is man" was an evident enough truth, and when one got down to the study, one found oneself at best working over again "what oft was thought but ne'er so well express'd."

Such an assumption of utter changelessness in the humanities, however, hardly lingers in informed circles today. In the sector of the humanities of most interest to the Modern Language Association, that concerned with verbal performance, most members of the Association would probably admit that matters are no longer what they were in the time of Alexander Pope. But what would they say if someone were to ask whether there has been a knowledge explosion in the humanities?

*Knowledge explosion.* We should be able to take for granted that everyone knows there has been a knowledge explosion in the humanities which matches, if it does not indeed surpass, that in the sciences. If we cannot take such knowledge for granted, humanists themselves are partly to blame for shying away from their new responsibilities and taking refuge in persecution complexes. But they are not entirely to blame. Knowledge in the humanities has low visibility. The results of the science explosion are, many of them, highly noticeable: radio programs and rocket ships, penicillin and computers. A new insight into intellectual history or a brilliant study in literary criticism has little to package or to broadcast and no hardware to show.

Nevertheless, all we need do to become aware of the humanities knowledge explosion is to glance around and take a little thought. We can glance for example at the 18,852 items in the "1965 MLA International Bibliography of Books and Articles on the Modern Languages and Literatures" in the May 1966 issue of *PMLA*—a limited as well as selective bibliography, we must remind ourselves, restricting itself to Western European languages and literatures with some perfunctory attention to Eastern European, and thus designedly excluding a good many of the most widespread languages and literatures in the world.

A total of 18,852 books and articles is pretty sizable. We could, of course, at some risk of being cavalier, discount the value of a great many of these studies (remembering always that the bibliographers have excluded countless items of minor significance). But even after a large discount, we must face the question, how much of the knowledge purveyed in the thousands of remaining studies was at all available in 1865? Simply fingering through this bibliography at random turns up items such as George A. Miller and Noam Chomsky on "Finitary Models of Language Users" (No. 679), R. A. Ranald on the degrees of myth in William Faulkner's South (No. 7550—consider the difference between what 1865 and 1965 make of myth), Norman T. Pratt's analysis of relationships between Lear and Oedipus (No. 4150—consider the difference between what 1865 and 1965 make of Oedipus), James J. Murphy on rhetoric in fourteenth-century Oxford (No. 1799—consider what was known of the history of rhetoric in 1865 and what in 1965), and David and Kay Henry on classificatory verbs

* An address delivered at the Plenary Meeting of the MLA Standing Committees in New York. 30 March 1967.

in the language of the Koyukon Indian tribe (No. 339—ask yourself how many languages had been scientifically described in 1865). These and thousands of other studies like them employ material and techniques and insights which have been made accessible only in the past few decades.

It is true that an increment of such material may not at all indicate a growth in wisdom. But the increment makes wisdom an even more urgent need than before. We cannot abolish the accumulation of knowledge. We are going to have to live with it and face all its implications. The fact is that the number of languages, literatures, and oral traditions accessible to study, the light which these languages, literatures and traditions cast on one another, the emergence of modern linguistics, the introduction of anthropological and psychological insights, and countless other new accumulations of knowledge and new fronts of awareness have made earlier language and literature study in many ways primitive if not obsolete. And in the humanities obsolescence itself does not reduce but adds to the knowledge explosion. For the humanities do best when they carry their past resolutely and sensitively with them, ruminating over it and converting its obsolescence into new relevance—as, for example, Noam Chomsky is undertaking to do with hitherto obsolete approaches to literature and language.[1]

Language and literature studies are not alone in this involuted richness. A comparable state of affairs exists in virtually every humanistic field. An obvious example is history, where instead of a small segment of mankind one must now study the entire human race and where the important but relatively superficial details of military and political history are being woven into a much higher-pile fabric, the history of the development of the human psyche through the evolution of cultures and of their knowledge-and-communication systems. Other complexities exist in sociology and anthropology, which were hardly even known as special subjects a century ago; in psychology, which has been so transformed in the past two centuries as to be virtually a new field or fields of knowledge; in philosophy, where existentialism and personalism (both relatively new) and linguistic analysis (relatively old, but refurbished a bit) have given new contours to thought; in theology, where the ferment, in Christian circles at least, has never been more active and where still more activity promises as the frontiers between theological and other thinking continue to expand; and so on indefinitely. The size of this knowledge explosion in the humanities dizzies us, and it dizzies us even more if we add in, as we quite legitimately can, the sciences themselves. For all of these, too, have their humanistic significance. They emerge from the human life world and have a history. The history of scientific thought and technological inventions, pursued in depth and detail, is as humanistic as anything one can conceive of, for it reflects the structuring and restructuring of man's relationship to his life world in a way which closely parallels and interacts with that of art and literature.

What can the individual scholar do about this situation? The first thing of course is to acknowledge it, not run away from it and pretend that the humanities are being neglected. If they are neglected, how did all this come about? An enterprise which is in fact as active and creative as is that in which we are engaged does no one any service if it projects an image of itself which falsely minimizes its achievements. It is true that not everything is succeeding in humanistic studies generally or in literary studies in particular. But nothing succeeds like success, and to secure the personnel and financial wherewithal for doing better we need to let the community at large know what a massive enterprise humanistic scholarship now is—what its achievements and its promise are as well as its needs.

The knowledge explosion in the humanities is perhaps best brought home to the general public by reference to quantity and variety in research, such as the foregoing recitation details. The explosion, however, in fact involves much more than this, for it involves a new kind of sophistication entailed in our present-day historical sense. Because we have access to so much historical fact, today we know a good deal about changes within the humanities which were not apparent to those in any age much before our own and which the individual scholar must constantly reflect on. Without pretending to exhaustive completeness here, we can consider some of these changes as they affect Modern Language Association interests, grouping them under three heads, namely, the changing cultural relevance of literature, the corresponding changes called for in education, and the shift producing what I have elsewhere

[1] See Chomsky's recent *Cartesian Linguistics: A Chapter in the History of Rationalist Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

styled a sense of "synchronic present."[2] I shall take these up in order.

1. *Cultural relevance.* We should be quite aware by now that imaginative verbal performance—poetry, let us say, in the large sense—does not fill exactly the same role in all cultures or in the same culture at different stages of its development. The work of Albert B. Lord, Eric Havelock,[3] and others has shown, for example, how poetry in oral or nonchirographic cultures serves a much wider spectrum of purposes than those it serves when a culture takes up the use of writing. In oral cultures, the singing of the bard was simultaneously a narration, a social event, a musical concert, a patriotic celebration, and a course in history, sociology, civics, demography (the list of the ships in the *Iliad* ii.494–875 serves purposes like those of a city directory), cosmology, and various skills such as shipbuilding (the maximum verbalization concerning shipbuilding, the closest thing to a shipbuilding manual of which Homer's Greece was capable, is the sort of thing found in the *Odyssey* v.225–261).

The history of the epic, we are now finding, is intimately connected with the changing fortunes of oral elements in verbalization and in thought itself. We have long known that with writing the epic becomes a different thing. Now we know that a basic reason why it does so is because writing affects the storage and retrieval of knowledge and thus relieves the oral epic of one of its major functions. Later print, too, radically affects knowledge storage and retrieval, and epic enters into still another stage. By Milton's age the relationship of epic poetry to man's life world or his total culture was radically different from that in the ninth century B.C. Now epic was supported in a slowly dissolving Latin matrix and was highly academic in a roundabout way, still residually oratorical, but more consciously programmatic and didactic and remote than before, though, for all that, none the less gorgeous.

The transformation of the epic is matched by similar transformations in other genres, some of which, such as letters, come into being with writing, others, such as tightly plotted long prose narratives, with print, still others, such as nonplotted or deplotted narratives, with our electronic world. What is changing here, we have become increasingly aware, is not merely a literary form but a whole culture and indeed (what comes to the same thing) the personality structures of those who make up the culture.

We are only beginning to understand the restructuring of the psyche entailed or implied in these shifts in the functions of poetry. But we do not have to have much experience to know that the successful teaching of literature depends on having a sense of what the psychological structures are today. This sense of difference does not separate us from the past but rather ties us to it, for it makes the past intelligible. If we have this sense, and some scholarly knowledge of the differences between ourselves and the past, there is nothing more fascinating for a class, undergraduate as well as graduate, than the literature of the past unless it is the literature of the past and the present taken together.

2. *Educational significance of verbal performance.* As the place of imaginative verbal performance evolves with the evolution of cultures, so, too, the way in which verbal performance is utilized in education likewise changes. We are becoming somewhat more aware of this, but perhaps not enough. Before the advent of writing, there was no study of literature or of anything else. Troglodytes were Deweyites. They learned by doing. Writing changed all this, as Havelock has shown in his *Preface to Plato*, but with glacial slowness, so that rhetoric (which is to say the study of oratory) remained in effective academic charge of literature from antiquity through the eighteenth century to a degree which today even a scholar can hardly believe. Ideas of literature, moreover, were confused by the academic ascendancy of Latin, the symbol of rhetorical culture which had itself paradoxically become a chirographically controlled language whose study, as I have attempted to show elsewhere,[4] constituted a puberty rite. We have never fully enough reflected upon this state of affairs out of which the study of modern vernacular languages and literatures emerged. In our postromantic bisexual academic setting, puberty rites are no longer what they used to be: certainly some of our younger citizens of university age show few external signs of having been through them. Little wonder that they do not think of literature the way Coleridge or Matthew Arnold did.

We sense the differences. But do we under-

[2] Walter J. Ong, *In the Human Grain* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), pp. 17–41.

[3] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960); Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963).

[4] Walter J. Ong, *The Barbarian Within* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 211–216.

stand them? William Riley Parker has started us on our way with his sensitive summary of certain relevant facts in his article on "Where Do English Departments Come From?"[5] But the causes and nature of the changes need still more study in depth.

If we are more fully aware of the resemblances and differences between past and present and thus of the changing roles which verbalization must play as cultures and psychological structures change, we will not be entirely petrified by the complex interaction today between literature proper and other forms of communication, notably the other mass media of movies, radio, and television—I say "other mass media" because print is already a mass medium, as for that matter spoken language itself is once a single language comes to be spoken by millions. One meets all too often with the hold-the-line mentality in the teaching of the written word. What is television doing to literature? The problem posed by a post-Homeric Greek would be: What is all this writing doing to our poetry? Pretty soon our children will even stop talking and simply pass letters to one another. And then where will we be? However, the children did not stop talking. But the writing did change poetry drastically, as we now know. In the sequence of the verbal media, a new medium does not cancel out an earlier medium but interacts with it. Writing changed poetry drastically, but it did not wipe out the oral medium. It is probable enough that after the invention of writing people talked more than ever: they certainly concentrated more in urban centers where talking was perhaps more likely. It is equally certain today that the new oral electronic media of radio and television are not going to wipe out the ability to write. Improved fountain pens are being developed, and there is even some hope for reliable ballpoints. And typography is moving ahead like any other technology, faster than before. But just as the style of speaking changed after the invention of writing—slowly but inevitably it became less formulaic, sparer, more analytic—so the style of literature is changing by interaction with the new media. We need to find out what the changes are in order to do our work better.

3. *Synchronic present.* Our accumulation of knowledge in the humanities has not been simply a linear development. That is to say, accumulation is not merely additive, with new facts piled on old. The humanities have always to do with the present in that they afford man his access to his own life world. As Alphonse de Waelhens has so aptly put it, the problem of the humanities is that of man in his present facing his past and his future.[6] But the past is not simply strung out as a line behind us. It enters into us, and it turns us in on ourselves and makes us face the future, which is inside us in a more real sense than it is "ahead" of us on some metaphoric chronological "road."

Our present age is the first age of mankind which has embarked on a serious academic study of itself. Generally speaking, earlier ages studied either abstract sciences or the wisdom of the past as such. Only recently have universities offered courses in contemporary history, contemporary civilization, or contemporary literature, to which have been added now new courses whose subject matter is expressly the future, such as courses concerned with urban problems or economic growth.

To superficial thinkers, this concentration on the present indicates that we are out of contact with the past. The fact is that concentration on the present is possible only because of a contact with the past which is richer than any other age has known. A few generations ago man was looking back over a few thousand years to what he thought was the beginning of the universe. Now we locate its beginning at five to ten billion years ago, and our knowledge of scores of cultures traces each back, in varying amount of detail, over thousands or even tens of thousands of years. Most of the knowledge of the past on our library shelves has accumulated in the last three or four generations.

Once one knows this much about the past, the present takes on a face of its own. It is both like and different from its antecedents. We study it circumstantially in terms of its likenesses and differences, tracing in today's United States culture, for example, romantic influences, rationalist and deistic influences, Renaissance, medieval scholastic, Augustinian, classical, and Hebrew influences all the way back to the elusive American Adam himself. Because he had not our kind of access to the depths of his past, Aristotle was quite unable to do this for the Greece of his day, although he made a brave little attempt at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*. We want to know where we came from in order to know where we are and, so far as possible, to plan where we are going.

[5] *CE*, XXVIII (1967), 339–351.

[6] *Existence et signification* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1958), p. 143.

The result of our penetration of the past is that our present is synchronic at least in the sense that it catches up all past time into itself. It is, we might put it, historically synchronic. But it is also synchronic in another way—geographically, we might say. In the past, geographic distance fragmented man's sense of the present. When news could travel only thirty miles a day, an event three hundred miles away had its impact in man's consciousness when it was ten days old. Events half way around the globe often had no impact for years. Today events that happen at a given moment are synchronic not only in the external world but, more and more, within man's consciousness as well. Gertrude Stein once said that there is one thing everybody is and that is contemporary. But contemporaneity made less difference in the past, when, no matter how much you believed in the simultaneity of your actions with myriads of other events, your experience of simultaneity was pretty well limited to your unaided sensory fields. Simultaneity was bounded by the horizon. Today we are overwhelmed with simultaneity and contemporaneity in our communications media, which short-circuit the rest of the world into our ears every quarter hour.

Our synchronic sense of the present has implications for the individual scholar which as yet we have not faced with sufficient reflection. Its most massive effect is the demand it creates for relevance. A demand for the "real" is always part of the humanities—the great age of humanism in the Renaissance grew out of a conviction that the curriculum was out of touch with man's "real" life world. But never has the demand been more insistent than it is today. More than ever before, the humanist is expected to show the relevance of his work, even when it is concerned with the distant past or with the most arcane minutiae.

The individual scholar in the humanities can get a hearing from the public today more readily than it is fashionable to profess in some learned circles. First of all, no one is campaigning against the humanities. In the ideal order, the cause of the humanities is as incontestable as motherhood. And in the practical order, the humanities as such have in our day at long last commanded direct support from the national government. Although we can regret that full funding of the National Endowment for the Humanities has not yet been accomplished, it is heartening to reflect on the general friendliness with which this new instrument of national policy and the associated National Endowment for the Arts have been received.

When we look to the popular media, although it goes against the accepted mythology to say so, it appears to me that never has society in general been more willing to accord some relevance to almost any kind of cultural pursuit. Magazines for which we might even use Dwight Macdonald's designation "midcult" and which Walker Gibson might class variously as "tough" or "sweet" or "stuffy"[1] have built their circulation in part on this willingness. Such magazines and the slick weekly magazines as well are now doing features which capitalize on the rather widespread persuasion that there must be something of intense human value even in the most bemused intellectual boondoggling.

Humanistic scholarship is not intellectual boondoggling, and it is hardly at its best when it relies on journalistic sensationalism. But we should know how or learn how to make the most of public expectancy. If public opinion is at all disposed to see the humanities as relevant in a variety of ways to modern education and culture, scholars, individually and corporately, should see to it that they are as relevant as possible. One of the most effective means of doing this is to keep the various stages in the educational process in contact with one another, relating the elementary and secondary and higher educational efforts as much they allow. We can learn here from the scientists who have to an impressive degree succeeded in remodeling mathematics, physics, and chemistry through increased contacts between elementary. secondary, and university personnel. The problem of the humanities is not entirely the same, but it is similar. The 1965 Tufts Seminar to Initiate New Experiments in Undergraduate Instruction found it could not realistically think of undergraduate instruction in the humanities in isolation from graduate instruction on the one hand and elementary and secondary instruction on the other. One of the sequels of the Seminar, the Voice Project at Stanford University under the direction of John Hawkes and Albert Guérard, has both faculty and students in freshman English working with grade school children in the process of improving techniques for teaching freshman English writing in the university.

*Technology and humanism.* The problem for

[1] Walker Gibson, *Tough, Sweet, and Stuffy: An Essay on Modern American Prose Styles* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966).

individual scholars today in the humanities is not a dearth of material and interest but a surfeit. If we face this fact, we can better develop or strengthen productive attitudes toward the tools which present-day technology has provided for handling masses of material, for we will be aware that we need all the technological helps we can find. We will welcome the computer, for example, which has been invented by present-day man because his unbearable accumulation of knowledge demands this new instrument for storage and retrieval. The more of our grub-work we can push onto the computer, the better. The computer will of course not only lighten but also add to our work. Inventions always do. An instrument devised to serve one more or less explicitly conceived purpose inevitably begins to generate and serve purposes for which it was not consciously contrived. The computer has opened whole new fields of humanistic research—in the study of stylistics, for example, and in lexical organization—which we can welcome, just as the early Renaissance humanists welcomed the great technological invention of their age, the printing press, a lumbering depersonalizing, grimy, mechanical contrivance, a mammoth artificiality, which made possible modern textual study and all that has come out of it, as well as whole new literary genres such as the novel itself. (Imagine *Finnegans Wake* in a purely scribal culture.) If we can regard the computer as a friend, we should be able to welcome also the use of mathematical and statistical theory, indispensable tools in handling the scholarly and educational problems with which we are faced in the teaching of language and, perhaps to a lesser degree, of literature.

Of course, individual scholars have thousands of problems which technological and statistical methods cannot solve at all. And the computer can become a distraction. The machine is there, and all sorts of useless investigations can be undertaken—and beyond a doubt are already being undertaken—simply because they are mechanically feasible. This, however, is nothing new. Think of all the useless matter put into print over the past five centuries simply because the presses were available. Or, for that matter, of all the idle words flapping around Chaucer's *House of Fame* or Socrates' Athens simply because man could talk.

*Present, past, and future.* The pursuit of the humanities is central to the reflectiveness whereby man lays hold on himself in his own history. It is thus an ongoing enterprise, never quite the same in a given age as it was in earlier ages, and yet in its development not at all freakish but continuous and patterned in ways which give rise to always further reflection. As study of the humanities develops, it plunges man farther and farther back into his past and at the same time concentrates his knowledge of the past more intensely on his present and forces him to plan for the future. We live today in an age more history-conscious, more self-conscious, and more future-conscious than any previous age of man.

This situation has its rewards but it also has its dangers. The relationships here are dialectical. The past is always approached through questions generated in the present—there is simply no other way to approach it. But to secure worthwhile answers to these same questions we must study the past not as a reflection of the present but on its own terms. This means that we must have serious scholars with the skills and knowledge affording direct contact with the past. There is, I believe, no small danger today that the fruitful relationship of past and present may be disturbed by our failure to foster the skills needed to maintain and develop contact with the past and thus with the present and future—skills needed not to a lesser degree than hitherto but to a greater degree, if only because our humanistic knowledge is expanding on all sides so rapidly.

Probably no studies can live off their own capital. Humanistic studies certainly cannot. We must have continuously new capital if we are to survive. This can be created only in the minds of individual men and women who have the power and the tools and the sensitivity to reinterpret man and his life world once again. For each age must deal afresh with the past. The truer each earlier interpretation has been, the more it has laid the ground for further investigation and understanding in the years to come.

This means that to carry forward our understanding we must make a supreme effort in our elementary, secondary, and higher educational institutions to attract first-rate minds to humanistic studies, and not merely in the colleges and universities but as far as possible very early, in secondary and even elementary schools, when they have the time to build the needed skills—to lay the foundations for

mastery of ancient and modern foreign languages, the knowledge of linguistics, literary history, psychology, cultural history of all sorts, including intellectual, philosophical, and religious, which the humanities require. There is danger, it seems to me, that in our necessary focus on the present and the past-in-the-present, on scholarship which is not merely antiquarian but truly relevant, we may lose sight of the fact that relevance is hard to come by, that in the last analysis it demands true learning, that is to say, it demands individual scholars of high intelligence who are truly sensitive because they are equipped with the hard-nosed, demanding skills which imaginative creative learning has always needed and needs now more than ever before.